

Wichita Daily Eagle

WOMAN ON A WHEEL.

Fielding Considers the Nature of the Female Cyclist.

Why Is It That She Will Run Over a Pedestrian As If It Was Her Duty?—Some Facts Collected on the Boulevard.

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It was in the edge of the evening that Mr. Jonas Thompson stepped out upon the boulevard. Mr. Thompson had reached the age when men begin to talk about the wonderful eyesight they had in their youth, in the days when they could distinguish red apples from green ones on their neighbor's trees in the blackest midnight. I had been walking with Mr. Thompson but my attention being arrested by the great number of lights flashing about on the boulevard, I had fallen a pace or two behind. He turned to speak to me, and at that moment a bicycle struck him on his extreme northwestern front, as he stood facing south-east, and he fell down on his stomach with his nose in the dust. A lady, alighting somewhat hurriedly from the bicycle, stepped on the back of his head, and slid gracefully from that balding shining surface to the ground.

"Good evening, Mr. Thompson," said the lady, as my friend struggled to his feet.

"How is Mrs. Thompson?"

"Well, the question is, how am I?" rejoined Jonas, dusting the knees of his pantaloons with one hand, while with the other he endeavored to restore his nose to its proper position in the middle of his countenance.

I do not content that my friend's rejoinder was in strict accord with the forms and usages of society, but I desire to apologize for him; while it has become quite common to meet a lady in this way on the boulevard, of an evening, the appropriate etiquette has not yet been formulated by social authorities. The instincts of a gentleman, however, should be his unfailing guide. I stepped forward.

"Permit me to help you," said I, "that you have not injured your wheel."

"I think one of the spokes is pretty badly bent," she said, severely, looking at Jonas.

"Spokes!" cried he, and with difficulty laid his hand upon his spine.

"Allow me to straighten it," said I, politely.

"No use," said Jonas, rubbing his back; "it can't be done."

But I was already busy with the wheel.

"Pardon me," said the lady, "but you don't seem to know much about a bicycle."

"No, madam," said I, humbly; "my parents taught me to read and write,

but I was always backward in the higher branches."

"Oh, here's Mr. Wheeler!" she cried, and stepped in front of a cyclist so suddenly that I could hardly keep my feet. He turned sharply to the right, in order not to cut the lady in two, and just then a person in a bifurcated costume, coming rapidly along on a bicycle, ran over Mr. Wheeler and proceeded on his or her course down the boulevard.

"I've been in a smash-up," Mr. Wheeler said to the lady, "and I want you to straighten out my wheel."

Mr. Wheeler tied a handkerchief diagonally across one of his eyes, which seemed to be rapidly swelling, and approached the lady's bicycle. Meanwhile Mr. Thompson had found some court plaster in his pocket, and he was decorating his face with it as I turned to him. I borrowed a piece of the court plaster, having torn my hand upon a corner of the bicycle. The lady was unhurt.

"Is there any respect in which I can be of service to you?" I asked, stepping out into the street. The lady looked at her head, and I was about to go upon my way when I was aware of two bicycles approaching side by side. So peculiar are the costumes of the riders on the boulevard that at the first glance I could not tell whether these were men or women. But the second showed me that one of them was looking at her feet, and the other at the constellation of the Great Bear in the heavens behind her. Then I knew that they were women, and I began to hear harps.

Hope, however, springs eternal. The space between them was just four inches. I saw that if I stood stock still, and neither of them changed her course, a life of hard study and rigid abstinence would carry me through. It did, with half an inch to spare. If I had had Jonas' equatorial diameter the prettiest woman in New York would be wearing black to-day.

"That was a narrow escape," said the lady, looking up from the bicycle which Wheeler was mending, "for those two wheels."

"Yes; I was really seriously alarmed," said I, "for them."

"That's Rita over on this side, too," said the lady. "Well, it's the first time she ever had a chance to talk to a man and permitted him to escape."

She turned toward Mr. Wheeler. Jonas and I lifted our hats with one hand each and, taking our lives in the other, proceeded across the boulevard.

"Now, why in thunder is it," asked Jonas, when we were alone, "that women on bicycles are so much more bloodthirsty than men?"

"Is it a fact?"

"No doubt of it. I've watched 'em on this boulevard. A man will ride recklessly, perhaps, but he'll break his neck to avoid a collision when it comes to the scratch. But a woman moves on like the car of Juggernaut. Not the hand of destiny, by jingo, can turn her aside."

"Now look here," he continued,

wheeling around on the far edge of the boulevard, "what you call that?"

He pointed to a figure approaching from the north, and at that moment quite clearly visible in the rays of an electric light.

"It looks like the same thing that ran over Mr. Wheeler," said I.

"Man or woman?"

"I give it up."

"Watch it," said Jonas. "If it runs into anybody it's a woman; if it doesn't, it's a man. That's the way we solve the problem here. It's like the riddle of the mushroom and the toad-stool. When you're crossing a street and see something like that bearing down toward you, just say to yourself: 'If I live, it's a man; if I die, it's a woman.'"

The figure passed us as he spoke. Certainly it was some sort of a divided garment.

"It's a man," said I.

"Well, I guess you're right," said Jonas. "No, it's a woman!"

As he spoke, two men stepped out upon the boulevard at the crossing just beyond where we were standing. They

saw the figure on the bicycle approaching. With two loud groans of despair, they attempted to disperse. Not so, by Jupiter. The bicyclist struck one of them just as the starboard pantaloons pocket, and glanced off onto the other one. When we arrived upon the scene, the first victim was calling, in the sacred name of modesty, for pins, while the other was trying to pull his head out of the forward wheel of the bicycle. A woman's voice was at the same time audible, saying: "I'm just perfectly certain that I rang my bell, and I don't see why you couldn't get out of the way."

"I perceive an interesting psychological problem here," said I. "Why is it that tender-hearted woman, mounted on a wheel, becomes a destroying angel?"

"Ask my wife," said Jonas.

I suppose he wanted me to have my share of sorrow that evening or he would not have made such a suggestion. Mrs. Thompson had evidently discussed the subject with Jonas several times. It is bad for an outsider to get involved in such a matter. When a woman has been all over a subject with her husband, she is apt to forget that men have either intellects or sensibilities. Mrs. Thompson rides a bicycle herself, and I gathered from her remarks that a considerable number of men had been awkward and impolite and foolish enough to get in front of it.

"It's the fault of the men," she said. "They don't look where they're going."

I could not regard this as satisfactory, so I asked Maude about it when I got home.

"Any woman who would be absurd enough to ride a bicycle," she said, "can be expected to do anything else that is foolish."

Maude has tried very hard to learn to ride a bicycle, but she started on the

THE ROUT OF MASCULINITY.

THE QUESTION OF SEX.

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A QUESTIONABLE COMPLIMENT.

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FRENCH REALISM.

Paul Bourget Defends the Analytical Novel of Passion.

The Psychological Study, Wherein "Mme. Bovary" and "Madame Tenebris" Are High Types of Art—Their Alleged Improperities.

[Copyright, 1893.]

When numbers of distinguished minds unite in publicly manifesting antipathy for a certain tendency in art it may be that they secretly despise each other—and this seems to me to be the case with reference to least to certain detractors of French fiction—but their opinion, even when erroneous, is not to be disregarded; and that is why, without reviewing opinions too evidently partial or approaches by far too unjust, I wish to attempt a reply to two or three of the objections most frequently raised against the analytical novel of passion over and above any objections to its nature.

That very old form of romance in French literature styled by our forefathers the analytical story—a very simple, very clear and very definite classification—is now known under the far more pedantic and more equivocal name of psychological novel. I say equivocal because this term seems to restrict the study of the human heart and mind within the limits of a special school or particular cult, whereas that study is of necessity within the province of all literature—and all literature M. Taine has wisely defined as a living psychology. Is not even the freest description of natural scenery a mere transcript of a mental state, a condition of the soul with reference to the observer, and similarly does not the most complicated romance of adventure have to do with some degree of sentiment and experience and, in consequence, does it not form an analysis of the mind and of the soul? Balzac in page after page of analytical writing which still remains too little known—for the pages are of tremendous interest, like all the

was often said to psychologists of the school of Joffroy, and it can be said with even greater truth to psychologists of fiction: "We do not stand at the window to see ourselves pass by in the street." When you set forth so minutely the conditions of mind and soul which lead up to the actions of your characters you substitute yourself for them without perceiving it, since you depict in them that which they themselves can neither declare nor discern. Life is made up of a semi-obscure, so to speak, of heart, a dumb and unceasing action of blind instinct, a spasmodic self-assertion and spontaneity of movement incompatible with that mental anatomy that is your end and method. For everything that one dissects is dead."

I do not suppose I have lessened the force of the objection in formulating it. It is very specious. Its great defect is its applicability to every form of literary expression as well as to the analytical process. A writer of the impersonal school—Flaubert, for instance, as the least indisputable of all—depicts scenery as a background for the actions of his characters, Mme. Bovary and Frederic Moreau. Does he not exhibit this scenery as he sees it with his artist's eye? Would it have been possible for him, except in the wildest hypothetical case, to have narrated anything but that which had actually come under the notice of the young man and the young woman? Every narrative of an external circumstance is never anything else than the transcript of the impression produced upon ourselves by that circumstance, and invariably a degree of individual interpretation is insinuated into every picture, real or imaginary, however objective it may be. It is indeed the effectiveness of this degree of individual interpretation which is the measure of the success of every artist who aims at presenting an undistorted picture of things as they are. Let us even admit that all subjects are not equally worthy of being treated and that all characters are not equally desirable as subjects for treatment in the novel of analysis. But does the fact that an evident limit in this respect exists render advisable the ex-



PAUL BOURGET.

theoretical masterpieces evolved by this great mind whose philosophical gifts equalled his imaginative ones—has happily denominated stories of analysis "novels of ideas," signifying thereby that their authors were above all concerned with the phenomena of inner life—the interior mental and spiritual existence of men as distinguished from their exterior lives. Even here, however, there is something vague, for this term "novel of ideas" (or of mental phenomena) would seem to be equally applicable to what we call in French the *livre à thèse*. However, it is the older expression, the one with which Sainte-Beuve was satisfied, seems to me the most accurate, especially as it places this sort of books in the series of corresponding works in other departments of literature. This is, for instance, a drama of analysis, of which Racine in tragedy and Marivaux in comedy, to cite only classics, are masters. There is also the poetry of analysis, which has been produced by this very Sainte-Beuve in his admirable "Joseph Delorme," by Baudelaire and by Sully Prudhomme. There are even autobiographies of analysis, among which the "Confessions" of St. Augustine are the venerated type and the "Reminiscences" of M. Renan form the secular kind. All these works possess the common characteristic of being especially devoted to the recording of the little facts of consciousness in the psychological sense, the ensemble of which is manifested exteriorly in the shape of passion, determined will and definite action. The intellects of these writers, very unequal and very diverse though they are, seem alike endowed with the faculty of reflective analysis, permitting them all to see in minute detail the entire hidden operation of mental processes. Perhaps the revelation, the unmasking of these obscure recesses of the mind, interests them more than the results of what transpires within these recesses. The chiming of the clock receives less of their attention than does the action of the mechanism which has brought about the chiming. It is in the dissecting of the phenomena of moral and sentimental manifestations that they excel in and delight as without even wishing it—like the great African prelate whose sole desire was to humiliate himself in expiation of a sinful past, and not to astonish worldly readers with the subtlety of his mental processes.

From a purely aesthetic point of view the opponents of the analytical novel of passion seem above all convinced that the various qualities which give to a fictitious narrative the atmosphere of reality are irreconcilable with accurate analysis. They reason about like this: "You pretend to depict passion. Now the primary attribute of the passions is to render out of the question on the part of those whom they dominate any psychological analysis of self. A man who really loves thinks of the object of his passion and not of that passion itself. It

Complete Manhood

AND HOW TO ATTAIN IT.

A medical work that tells the causes, describes the effects, points the remedy. Scientifically the most valuable, artistically the most beautiful, and medically the most complete. Every man bearing a half-dozen illustrations in text, subjects treated: Nervous Debility, Impotence, Sterility, Development, Venereal Disease, the Blood, Throat, Intestines, etc. Every man who would know the 6 and 7 and 8 and 9 and 10 and 11 and 12 and 13 and 14 and 15 and 16 and 17 and 18 and 19 and 20 and 21 and 22 and 23 and 24 and 25 and 26 and 27 and 28 and 29 and 30 and 31 and 32 and 33 and 34 and 35 and 36 and 37 and 38 and 39 and 40 and 41 and 42 and 43 and 44 and 45 and 46 and 47 and 48 and 49 and 50 and 51 and 52 and 53 and 54 and 55 and 56 and 57 and 58 and 59 and 60 and 61 and 62 and 63 and 64 and 65 and 66 and 67 and 68 and 69 and 70 and 71 and 72 and 73 and 74 and 75 and 76 and 77 and 78 and 79 and 80 and 81 and 82 and 83 and 84 and 85 and 86 and 87 and 88 and 89 and 90 and 91 and 92 and 93 and 94 and 95 and 96 and 97 and 98 and 99 and 100 and 101 and 102 and 103 and 104 and 105 and 106 and 107 and 108 and 109 and 110 and 111 and 112 and 113 and 114 and 115 and 116 and 117 and 118 and 119 and 120 and 121 and 122 and 123 and 124 and 125 and 126 and 127 and 128 and 129 and 130 and 131 and 132 and 133 and 134 and 135 and 136 and 137 and 138 and 139 and 140 and 141 and 142 and 143 and 144 and 145 and 146 and 147 and 148 and 149 and 150 and 151 and 152 and 153 and 154 and 155 and 156 and 157 and 158 and 159 and 160 and 161 and 162 and 163 and 164 and 165 and 166 and 167 and 168 and 169 and 170 and 171 and 172 and 173 and 174 and 175 and 176 and 177 and 178 and 179 and 180 and 181 and 182 and 183 and 184 and 185 and 186 and 187 and 188 and 189 and 190 and 191 and 192 and 193 and 194 and 195 and 196 and 197 and 198 and 199 and 200 and 201 and 202 and 203 and 204 and 205 and 206 and 207 and 208 and 209 and 210 and 211 and 212 and 213 and 214 and 215 and 216 and 217 and 218 and 219 and 220 and 221 and 222 and 223 and 224 and 225 and 226 and 227 and 228 and 229 and 230 and 231 and 232 and 233 and 234 and 235 and 236 and 237 and 238 and 239 and 240 and 241 and 242 and 243 and 244 and 245 and 246 and 247 and 248 and 249 and 250 and 251 and 252 and 253 and 254 and 255 and 256 and 257 and 258 and 259 and 260 and 261 and 262 and 263 and 264 and 265 and 266 and 267 and 268 and 269 and 270 and 271 and 272 and 273 and 274 and 275 and 276 and 277 and 278 and 279 and 280 and 281 and 282 and 283 and 284 and 285 and 286 and 287 and 288 and 289 and 290 and 291 and 292 and 293 and 294 and 295 and 296 and 297 and 298 and 299 and 300 and 301 and 302 and 303 and 304 and 305 and 306 and 307 and 308 and 309 and 310 and 311 and 312 and 313 and 314 and 315 and 316 and 317 and 318 and 319 and 320 and 321 and 322 and 323 and 324 and 325 and 326 and 327 and 328 and 329 and 330 and 331 and 332 and 333 and 334 and 335 and 336 and 337 and 338 and 339 and 340 and 341 and 342 and 343 and 344 and 345 and 346 and 347 and 348 and 349 and 350 and 351 and 352 and 353 and 354 and 355 and 356 and 357 and 358 and 359 and 360 and 361 and 362 and 363 and 364 and 365 and 366 and 367 and 368 and 369 and 370 and 371 and 372 and 373 and 374 and 375 and 376 and 377 and 378 and 379 and 380 and 381 and 382 and 383 and 384 and 385 and 386 and 387 and 388 and 389 and 390 and 391 and 392 and 393 and 394 and 395 and 396 and 397 and 398 and 399 and 400 and 401 and 402 and 403 and 404 and 405 and 406 and 407 and 408 and 409 and 410 and 411 and 412 and 413 and 414 and 415 and 416 and 417 and 418 and 419 and 420 and 421 and 422 and 423 and 424 and 425 and 426 and 427 and 428 and 429 and 430 and 431 and 432 and 433 and 434 and 435 and 436 and 437 and 438 and 439 and 440 and 441 and 442 and 443 and 444 and 445 and 446 and 447 and 448 and 449 and 450 and 451 and 452 and 453 and 454 and 455 and 456 and 457 and 458 and 459 and 460 and 461 and 462 and 463 and 464 and 465 and 466 and 467 and 468 and 469 and 470 and 471 and 472 and 473 and 474 and 475 and 476 and 477 and 478 and 479 and 480 and 481 and 482 and 483 and 484 and 485 and 486 and 487 and 488 and 489 and 490 and 491 and 492 and 493 and 494 and 495 and 496 and 497 and 498 and 499 and 500 and 501 and 502 and 503 and 504 and 505 and 506 and 507 and 508 and 509 and 510 and 511 and 512 and 513 and 514 and 515 and 516 and 517 and 518 and 519 and 520 and 521 and 522 and 523 and 524 and 525 and 526 and 527 and 528 and 529 and 530 and 531 and 532 and 533 and 534 and 535 and 53